




UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

September 28, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Record

FROM: Jonathan M. Kurland
Administrator, NMFS Alaska Region 

SUBJECT: Sixth Status Report on the Development of a Salmon FMP
Amendment to Address Cook Inlet

By an amended remedy order dated May 15, 2023, the United States District Court for the District of Alaska required the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to file a status report every 45 days discussing its progress in the preparation of a new Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP) amendment, as well as any pertinent information relating to the management of the Cook Inlet salmon fishery for the 2023 fishing season. This memorandum serves as the sixth status report since the Court issued its initial remedy order dated November 28, 2022, and the second since the court issued its amended remedy order.

As previously reported, NMFS has been developing a Secretarial FMP amendment and proposed regulations to implement a federal management regime for the Cook Inlet Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), in full accordance with the Court's remand order. NMFS has devoted extensive resources and staff time to this effort, and work on the proposed FMP amendment and proposed regulations is nearly complete. The proposed FMP amendment and proposed regulations that NMFS releases for public comment will reflect input received from stakeholders and tribes, and rely on information that was carefully vetted by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee. This fall, NMFS will publish a notice in the Federal Register that the proposed FMP amendment is available for a 60-day public comment period, as required by MSA Section 304(c)(4)(B). 16 U.S.C. § 1854(c)(4)(B). At the same time, NMFS will propose regulations in the Federal Register for a 60-day comment period, consistent with MSA Section 304(c)(6). 16 U.S.C. § 1854(c)(6). NMFS remains on track to implement a federal management regime for the Cook Inlet EEZ salmon fishery by May 2024.

In the absence of federal regulations governing the Cook Inlet EEZ salmon fishery in 2023, the State regulated vessels permitted by the State pursuant to 16 U.S.C. § 1856(a)(3)(A). The 2023 fishery is now closed.